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Victoria Raiton, Chief  
Surface Transportation Board

822 Buck Rd.  
New Providence, Pa  
17560

Dec 2, 2003

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AB-167

1095X

Friend Vicki,

Greetings from Lancaster County, Pa. I hope I am not being presumptuous in using first names, but from our conversation on 11/19/03 at the Hoffman Building in Quarryville, I hope to be considered a friend.

As per our conversation at the meeting on 11/19/03 regarding some of the hazards connected with the Enola freight line, I am enclosing some clippings from the Southern Chronicle which serves southern Lancaster Co. as does the Sun-Ledger newspaper. I'm also enclosing a copy of my article as it appeared in the Ledger newspaper.

After my conversation with you I had a lengthy conversation with a Mr. Frank Peiffer, supervisor in Martin Sup. who was involved in the former hearings of FAST vs Surface Transportation Board and his opinion was that the decision reached by the Courts as mentioned in STB Docket No AB-167 (Sab No 1095X) is still of the best interest to this area.

If the decision of the Courts stand, ~~and~~ the individual municipalities could then implement whatever project their constituents desired. To the east of Quarryville the right of way goes through part of the main Amish Community, which was not properly represented and my opinion would be that you would find at least 90% of the residents opposed to a Rail to Trail project.

To the west of Quarryville there is a lot of wooded area and the opposition probably would not be so great. However this is also the area I had mentioned of train derailments and the possibility of some major contamination of hazardous material. If this ~~area~~ were cleaned up as per government specifications the cost would be astronomical. But to ignore it would mean a major health hazard in the future. This right of way is also the only one that would have the high voltage lines running overhead which is another hazard, both of being electrocuted and of a health hazard walking or riding underneath.

Mr. Fred Eby, now a resident at a local nursing home testified that when he had his excavating business that they buried carloads of hazardous material for the then owners of the rail line. His testimony is probably included in the testimony given at prior hearings.

Also many if not all of the local State and Federal representatives were opposed as well as the Lancaster Co. Commissioners because of the possible hidden costs not only of the construction but also maintaining a trail.

I hope the board considers the fact that even though the group present at the meetings were probably 90% in favor of a trail, most of them were from outside the area and were not local taxpayers. These people, who many have moved into the area from the cities, have raised much havoc in the area due to their

determination to make things happen for their own desires and do not truly represent the local community. Many of those present were not taxpayers in Lancaster Co and there are hundreds of acres in the Lancaster Co Park as well as areas set aside by Penna Power and Light Co. as well as other organizations where people can go hiking and enjoying nature.

As for the historical value that also had been addressed by prior testimony and considered in the courts and was not deemed to be a valid reason for a trail. Much of the architecture could still be preserved even if there were ~~not~~ trail and some of the bridges should be removed as per former agreement.

I hope also that the board would consider holding a meeting with the local politicians, elected officials of the municipalities and the news media, but not open to the public to get insight from those who represent the residents of the area.

I apologize for this lengthy letter and also did not realize until this morning that the deadline for comments was 12/03/03 which is tomorrow but I still wanted to send you the clippings.

If there is anyway I can be of future assistance please write to me or call me at 717-786-6252 and leave a message and I will call you!

Sincerely yours,

Benjamin B. King (The Dutchman)

# Rails-to-trails controversy

As I write today's date I realize that tomorrow it will be 40 years since President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. Much focus has been recently put on the issue of whether Lee Harvey Oswald acted on his own or not. Many theories have been given and perhaps the public will never know.

Another happening that concerns our family is that the date, Nov. 22, marks the 48th anniversary of our wedding. It is hard to believe that if the Lord tarries and we survive we may celebrate our Golden Anniversary.

According to some reports, the past 50 years have brought about the greatest change of any similar length period with all the modern technology available today. This country has emerged as the strongest nation on earth and one has to wonder how long it will be so and what it will be like if it changes. For this reason we must ever be watchful as changes come and to anchor our faith in the immovable Rock and Fortress of an almighty and everlasting God, who in love created man to be His companion and in His Love our salvation is assured.

On Wednesday, the Dutchman attended the meeting at the Hoffman Building in Quarryville held by the Surface Transportation Board from Washington, D.C. concerning the issue of converting the right of way of the Low Grade Railroad, now known as the Enola Line, to linear park or a rails to trails project open to the public.

This is to benefit those people who supposedly have no other place to go to exercise or to take their children.

The first impression one had at the meeting was that this was not only the greatest need the community has but also that it would be financially feasible, which 10 years ago was not so found.

I suppose there were only about one in 10 of the people present who are opposed to the idea. The newly re-elected county commissioner, Pete Shaub, along with the newly elected

## The Dutchman from Down Yonder



Dick Shellenberger and Mollie Henderson issued a statement supporting the proposed trail and committing themselves to financially supporting the project if it should happen. Among the supporters was Dr. Alan Peterson, a well known and consultant in the medical field and one of the founders of the Family Health Center, Quarryville. Dr. Peterson is our family doctor and I consider it a privilege to call him a personal friend. He aptly described the need for a place for people to go to for exercise which is beneficial to good health. He cited the growing health care costs of disease like diabetes and heart conditions.

However, I'm afraid Dr. Peterson is not aware of the potential health hazards of parts of the right of way where due to train derailments, much hazardous material was buried on the right of way which now, in the steel railroad cars, where it was being transported, in all likelihood has rusted through and seeped into the ground creating a major health hazard, as well of the hazards of the high voltage lines that are above the trail and extend the entire length, and cannot be removed. The cost of removing and cleaning these problem areas would be prohibitive financially. This issue was not brought out at the meeting on Wednesday.

Previous testimony was given and the agreement was reached and upheld by numerous courts in the land, to transfer the ground to the municipalities where the line goes though, thus giving the townships and towns the right to develop it as they see fit and financially feasible. Although the Dutchman actively supports historical preservation and the nature trails, he feels this would be the appropriate conclusion to the issue.

Aufwedersehn.

The view from here

## When history is incidental

I'd like nothing better than to see the Enola freight line restored to service, to be able to sit along Valley Rd. on a winter night and watch the flashes of light as the pantographs of the electric engines knock ice from the overhead power lines. I'd like nothing better than to see freight trains running through the cuts and under the bridge on Mt. Pleasant Rd. or over the stone arches above N. Church St.

And that's where I differ with most of the people who want to see the now-abandoned rail line preserved intact. I'd like to see it used for its original purpose - an outcome that seems unlikely according to the lines present owner. But I am not willing to use the preservation argument to force townships or the county to maintain dozens of bridges so people can bike, hike, and ride along the rail bed.

And the bridges, not the 'historic preservation of the entire line' are at the center of the rails-to-trails argument. Without them, the rail bed becomes little more than a series of paths interrupted by back roads and main highways. It is difficult to imagine hikers and riders having to descend from the trail, wait for a break in traffic on Rt. 222, cross the highway, and climb back to the trail to continue their bucolic trip.

While many are masterpieces of stone ma-

sons' art, built to withstand the pounding of heavy trains, they have been in place for a century now. And while they were more than adequate for the limited road traffic of the early 20th century, many are too narrow and too short to pass more than one modern truck at a time.

The maintenance or replacement of these bridges is the major factor in the future of the Enola line. The job is too large and stretches too far into the future to be awarded to any non-governmental body. That leaves either the townships, most of which have indicated no interest in the project, the county, or the state.

So far, the state has indicated it is willing to support a rails-to-trails project but not assume ownership and the responsibility that goes with it. County officials have also indicated they support such a use, but they, too, have stopped short of committing to ownership.

Last week's hearing in Quarryville was ostensibly about preserving the history of the line - a requirement the federal government and the Norfolk Southern Railroad must meet.

But most of the speakers, proponents of the rails-to-trails, wanted the line preserved intact because that's the only way they can have their trail. The history is incidental.

# Rail line still carries water, power

Freight cars haven't traveled the Enola low grade freight line across southern Lancaster County for more than a decade, but the line remains a corridor for water and power transmission across the region. Pennsylvania American has a 10-inch main in the right-of-way that carries water from the storage tank at Mars Hill, Bart Township. The water main extends west to Quarryville, where it provides some of the borough's supply and acts as a backup for the community's well. It also extends east to Parkesburg and Coatesville.

While the water line runs underground, the overhead high voltage lines carry electricity from the Safe Harbor generating station on the Susquehanna to the Amtrak passenger rail line at Parkesburg. "We're still using the lines to transfer electric power to our Harrisburg line, and we intend to keep using them," said Amtrak spokesman Cliff Black.

While the railroad right-of-way may be given to seven townships across the Southern End or turned into a trail, Amtrak and Pennsylvania American will retain easements to the corridor.

Water and electric lines continue to use the Enola low grade rail corridor.

